

Owl of Athena

The pounding begins / like the old war drums / in my ears. I can hear your heart / as
you watch me / from outside my exhibit: / "Endangered." As if it could have ended /
any other way— / Striding into battle / armed only with a vow / of chastity. It
seemed noble, / or something, yet would we / call it wise? They've been putting
males in here with me, but / the infrared camera mounted / in the corner of the cage /
has recorded no "action." You're missing the point— / you have to let me die / so
that you might learn. You'll say *We tried so hard.* / Ask: *Why did they start dying?* / Say:
It's our fault, naturally. / Ask: *Artificial insemination?* / Say: *Science created / this problem,*
surely it can / fix it. Ask: *Is this our last shot?* / Say: *We won't make the same mistake*
twice— / now we know. / Ask: *What have we learned?* / Ask: *How much time do we have /*
left? Ask: *What happens when / they're all gone?*